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News Release

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FINALISTS SELECTED FOR DARPA *GRAND CHALLENGE*

Twenty-Three Teams Take to Desert in Pursuit of $2 Million Prize for Robotics Technologies

Fontana, Calif. – The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) today announced that 23 robotic ground vehicles have been selected to compete in a desert road test designed to advance autonomous technologies that could one day save lives on the battlefield.

The DARPA *Grand Challenge* final event will be held Saturday, October 8, in the Mojave Desert near Primm, Nevada. The finalists will traverse a rugged desert course that features lakebeds, narrow desert roads, tight turns, tunnels, gateways and treacherous mountain passes. The actual course will not be revealed to teams until two hours before the event begins at approximately 6:30 a.m. (PDT). The team whose vehicle traverses the entire course the fastest in under ten hours will win $2 million.

The finalists, in alphabetical order, are: Axion Racing (Westlake Village, Calif.), Team Cajunbot (Lafayette, La.), Team CalTech (Pasadena, Calif.), CIMAR (Gainesville, Fla.), Team Cornell (Ithaca, N.Y.), Team DAD (Morgan Hill, Calif.), Desert Buckeyes (Ohio State University, Columbus), Team ENSCO (Springfield, Va.), The Golem Group/UCLA (Los Angeles), The Gray Team (Metairie, La.), Insight Racing (Cary, N.C.), Intelligent Vehicle Safety Systems I (Littleton, Colo.), Mitre Meteorites (McLean, Va.), MonsterMoto (Cedar Park, Tex.), Mojavaton (Grand Junction, Colo.), Princeton University (Princeton, N.J.), Red Team (Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh), Red Team Too (Carnegie-Mellon), SciAutonics/Auburn Engineering, (Thousand Oaks, Calif.), Stanford Racing Team (Palo Alto, Calif.), Team Terra Max (Oshkosh, Wis.), Virginia Tech Team Rocky (Blacksburg, Va.), Virginia Tech Grand Challenge Team.

The finalists were selected at the conclusion of an intense eight-day semifinal known as the National Qualification Event (NQE), held at the California Speedway at Fontana, Calif., from September 28 through today. Forty-three robots of many shapes and sizes took turns pursuing a series of 2.2-to-2.7-mile courses designed to resemble desert conditions. The semifinalists had been chosen from among 195 original applicants; over the past several months, DARPA narrowed the field to the 43 semifinalists through a series of qualifying activities, including in-person site visits by DARPA officials to assess the capabilities of the various robots.

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"In 2004, we thought it was quite an achievement that a robot was able to go about seven and one half miles," said DARPA Director Dr. Tony Tether. "But the results of this NQE tells me that we will leave that in the dust of the Mojave!"

Grand Challenge Program Manager Ron Kurjanowicz added, "The DARPA *Grand Challenge* is a truly powerful mix of American ingenuity, team spirit, competitiveness, entrepreneurship, engineering and computer science. And while the teams have a strong competitive streak, we've seen many teams help each other during the NQE."

"We established the *Grand Challenge* to foster the development of autonomous vehicle technology that will some day save the lives of Americans protecting our country on the battlefield," said Tether. "The quality of this field is strong evidence that we are succeeding."

Further information on how to cover this event and regular updates on the competition are available by visiting the official *Grand Challenge* website, www.darpa.mil/grandchallenge, or the event website at www.grandchallenge.org.

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DARPA is the central research and development organization for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). The agency manages research and development projects for the DoD and pursues research in technology areas where the risk can be very high, but success provides dramatic capability advances for the DoD.